

FEDERAL REAUTHORIZATION RELATED UPDATE

Currently, the Congressional appropriators have stated that substantial additional funds are needed to pass the 13 annual spending bills. The Agricultural appropriations bill is but one of the spending bills. Five billion dollars of unspent funds allocated for the current fiscal year is being shifted to pay for programs and priorities in 2004. The budget resolution adopted by the House and Senate in April is now viewed as unrealistic.

This is noteworthy because of the number and scope of bills ranging from mere reauthorization of the child nutrition programs to additional expenditures for prevention of anorexia, obesity and funding of miscellaneous fitness programs.

Recently, the ASFSA's Legal Counsel Marshall Matz described the reauthorization issues as: reduced price meal elimination, school breakfast expansion and 12% verification. Marshall shared that the North Carolina's Board of Education had submitted a state legislative resolution requesting the elimination of reduced price school meals.

North Carolina's, Senator Elizabeth Dole maiden speech included her appeal for the elimination of the reduced price school meals likening it to the WIC eligibility standards for qualification.

The House Education and Workforce Committee will not be taking the Child Nutrition Program Reauthorization up until sometime in July. They are finishing up with the Head Start reauthorization.

Three new bills have been introduced in Congress, H. R. 2225 (Caps, (D-CA.); H.R. 2227 (Castle, R-DE); and S. 1172 (Frist, (TN) bringing the total of "nutrition" related bills to sixteen.

H.R. 2225 by Representative Caps would authorize the Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to make grants to local education agencies to support the purchase or lease and use of vending machines that offer for sale healthy foods and beverages in schools. Grants use of funds:

- Lease or purchase vending machines offering healthy products; and
- Off set revenue loss.

This bill defines "healthy foods and beverages" as products that have 30 percent or less of calorie from fat, 10 percent or less of calories from saturated fat and trans fat, and 35 percent or less of calories from added sugars. The bill also limits the portion sizes of foods and beverages offered for sale in vending machines.

Representative Castle introduced H.R. 2227 called the Obesity Prevention Act, to establish school-based programs to help reduce and prevent obesity among children by offering two grant programs at the United States Department of Agriculture, one at the United States Department of Health and Human services, and establish an obesity commission.

The USDA would receive \$10 million for competitive grants for state educational agencies to develop model nutrition education and physical fitness programs for elementary and secondary students including, but not limited to, the following:

- Collection of data on overweight children and/ programs and services available;
- Developing, implementing model comprehensive, coordinated curricula
- Developing, implementing state guidelines, including nutrition education, physical activity.
- Collaborating with community based organizations, etc. to target lower income children, ethnic minorities, and other children and youth at risk for obesity.

The USDA would receive \$20 million for awarding grants, at least one per state, to local educational agencies for pilot projects to promote healthy eating habits and increase fitness, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Promoting healthy eating through development and implementation of nutrition education programs and curricula;
- Educating parents and students about the relationship of a poor diet and inactivity to obesity and other health problems;
- Providing training and technical assistance to food service professionals to develop nutritious, more appealing menus and recipes, etc.

S. 1172 by Senator Majority Leader Frist authorizes \$60 million to create demonstration programs and focusing on community interventions, school-based activities, and health care delivery system programs, utilizing on education, outreach, and intervention techniques.

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is authorized to collect information on fitness levels, etc. Additional elements include sundry instructions to have DHHS to review new information on obesity trends; allow states to use their Preventive Services Block Grant funds for community education on nutrition and physical activity; the Secretary of HHS to report on research relative to obesity treatment and prevention; and collating the results; and have the Secretary report on the use of the Youth Media campaign and its impact on children's behavior.

On Thursday, June 5, 2003, Senator Elizabeth Dole (R-NC) made her maiden speech on the Senate floor and central to her comments was a call to eliminate the reduced price category within the National School Lunch Program, which according to the Senator would result in free, lunches and breakfasts for an additional 2.5 million children per year. Her intent is to use the WIC program eligibility of 185 percent of poverty to qualify a family as eligible. Consequently: "Should we not use the same standard for School Lunch? Standardizing the guidelines would even allow us to immediately certify children from WIC families for the School Lunch Program."

Senator Dole has instructed the Legislative Counsel to prepare a bill addressing the issues of hunger, child nutrition reauthorization and the Global Food Program.